

Congress wrapped up business this week on the Defense Department Authorization bill for 2010 and voted on a Cap and Trade bill which would fundamentally alter the way carbon emissions are limited in the United States.

First, I was pleased to support the National Defense Authorization Act which authorizes \$550.4 billion for standard operations at the Department of Defense, as well as \$130 billion for funding ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The House approved the bill by a vote of 389 to 22.

I'm proud to say that the bipartisan work by members of the Hampton Roads delegation resulted in the inclusion of two provisions that aim to prevent a carrier moving from Norfolk to Mayport, Florida. Additionally, the bill provides for a much deserved 3.4% pay increase for all service members.

While the bill goes a long way in providing for a 313 ship navy and allocating funds for the repair and maintenance of ships, I am disappointed by the failure to permanently fund veteran's benefits and eliminate the "widow's tax."

Also, the bill fails to expressly prohibit the transfer of Guantanamo detainees into the U.S. and cuts the budget of our missile defense program. I will continue to work with my colleagues to address these issues in the final conference report.

Next, on Friday the House debated and passed by a vote of 219-212, the American Clean Energy and Security Act, also known as "Cap and Trade." The bill would cap the amount of carbon emissions manufacturers and energy producers may emit and provide for a system of trading these credits between companies so they may still produce at current levels, albeit at a higher cost; thus making our products and energy more expensive.

I believe we must focus on aggressively pursuing alternative and renewable energy, but do so in a manner that does not create greater problems than it solves. This is why I could not support today's Cap and Trade legislation. There is much for Congress to complete in the way of transitioning our economy from reliance upon non-renewable energy and our dependence on

foreign oil. To this end I am a cosponsor of the American Clean Energy Act, and will continue to work across the aisle to bring commonsense solutions to this problem.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.